

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 359, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LAND GRANT PATENT MODIFICATION

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2121) to modify a land grant patent issued by the Secretary of the Interior.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2121

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS TO LAND GRANT PATENT ISSUED BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

Patent Number 61-2000-0007, issued by the Secretary of the Interior to the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, Chippewa County, Michigan, pursuant to section 5505 of division A of the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act, 1997 (Public Law 104-208; 110 Stat. 3009-516) is amended in paragraph 6, under the heading "SUBJECT ALSO TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS" by striking "Whitefish Point Comprehensive Plan of October 1992, or a gift shop" and inserting "Human Use/Natural Resource Plan for Whitefish Point, dated December 2002, permitted as the intent of Congress".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum on Michigan's Upper Peninsula sits on land jutting out into Lake Superior near the Canadian border. The museum collection presents the history of and preserves artifacts from the many shipwrecks that occurred in the area, including perhaps the most famous, the Edmund Fitzgerald, which went down in 1975, along with her crew of 29 men.

The museum sits on land originally obtained from the Department of the Interior under a land grant patent. A new management plan developed by the museum would improve visitor services. This legislation amends the origi-

nal patent to reference the new management plan.

Representative STUPAK is to be commended for his diligence on behalf of this legislation. An earlier version of this measure was approved by the House in the last Congress, and we urge our colleagues to support H.R. 2121 today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 2121 is a simple measure that updates a land patent reference to an outdated management plan currently being used by the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society. This 8-acre property was obtained in 1992 from the Department of the Interior under a land grant patent. Under the new resource management plan, the museum will be able to greatly improve its visitor access to wildlife areas and to expand its facilities to accommodate additional shipwreck exhibits.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to yield such time as he may consume to my colleague, Mr. STUPAK to speak to the bill.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the author of H.R. 2121, and I'd like to thank Chairman RAHALL and ranking member YOUNG and their staff on the Natural Resource Committee for assisting and moving this legislation forward.

H.R. 2121 is a straightforward bill that would allow the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society to implement a new Human Use/Natural Resource Management Plan for the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum in Chippewa County, Michigan.

While this legislation was approved by the House of Representatives in September of 2006 in the 109th Congress, but the 109th Congress ended before the Senate had time to consider the bill. By acting on this bill now, I am hopeful the House will allow the Senate ample time to consider and approve this legislation.

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the history of shipwrecks in the Great Lakes. Since 1992, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society has operated the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum to educate the public about shipwrecks in the region.

The museum provides exhibits on several shipwrecks in the area, including an in-depth exhibit on the wreck of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, which was lost with her entire crew of 29 men near Whitefish Point, Michigan on November 10, 1975. Among the items on display is a 200-pound bronze bell recovered from the wreckage in 1995 as a memorial to her lost crew.

In 2002, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Michigan Audubon Society, and the local community, finalized a new management plan to improve the experience at the museum.

The new management plan, which was signed and agreed upon by all the parties, will allow the Historical Society to expand the museum exhibits while addressing concerns about parking and access to surrounding wildlife areas.

However, because the original land grant patent references the previous management plan, legislation to amend the patent is necessary before the new management plan can be implemented. In response, I've introduced this legislation, H.R. 2121, to amend the land grant patent to allow the new plan to be implemented.

Congressman DAVE CAMP from Michigan has joined me in cosponsoring this legislation, and I thank him for his support.

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society has continuously improved the experience at the museum since it was established in 1992. With the approval of H.R. 2121, Congress will allow the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum to further develop this cultural and historical resource.

I urge my colleagues to support this simple legislation which will improve the opportunities available to visitors of Chippewa County, Michigan, and the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum.

I thank all Members for their cooperation with this legislation.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I yield back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2121.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EIGHTMILE WILD AND SCENIC RIVER ACT

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 986) to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of the Eightmile River in the State of Connecticut as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 986

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Eightmile Wild and Scenic River Act".

SEC. 2. WILD AND SCENIC RIVER DESIGNATION, EIGHTMILE RIVER, CONNECTICUT.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Eightmile River Wild and Scenic River Study Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-65; 115 Stat. 484) authorized the study of the Eightmile River in the State of Connecticut from its headwaters downstream to its confluence with the Connecticut River for potential inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

(2) The segments of the Eightmile River covered by the study are in a free-flowing condition, and the outstanding resource values of the river segments include the cultural landscape, water quality, watershed hydrology, unique species and natural communities, geology, and watershed ecosystem.

(3) The Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Study Committee has determined that—

(A) the outstanding resource values of these river segments depend on sustaining the integrity and quality of the Eightmile River watershed;

(B) these resource values are manifest within the entire watershed; and

(C) the watershed as a whole, including its protection, is itself intrinsically important to this designation.

(4) The Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Study Committee took a watershed approach in studying and recommending management options for the river segments and the Eightmile River watershed as a whole.

(5) During the study, the Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Study Committee, with assistance from the National Park Service, prepared a comprehensive management plan for the Eightmile River watershed, dated December 8, 2005 (in this section referred to as the "Eightmile River Watershed Management Plan"), which establishes objectives, standards, and action programs that will ensure long-term protection of the outstanding values of the river and compatible management of the land and water resources of the Eightmile River and its watershed, without Federal management of affected lands not owned by the United States.

(6) The Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Study Committee voted in favor of inclusion of the Eightmile River in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and included this recommendation as an integral part of the Eightmile River Watershed Management Plan.

(7) The residents of the towns lying along the Eightmile River and comprising most of its watershed (Salem, East Haddam, and Lyme, Connecticut), as well as the Boards of Selectmen and Land Use Commissions of these towns, voted to endorse the Eightmile River Watershed Management Plan and to seek designation of the river as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

(8) The State of Connecticut General Assembly enacted Public Act 05-18 to endorse the Eightmile River Watershed Management Plan and to seek designation of the river as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

(b) DESIGNATION.—Section 3(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"() EIGHTMILE RIVER, CONNECTICUT.—Segments of the main stem and specified tributaries of the Eightmile River in the State of Connecticut, totaling approximately 25.3 miles, to be administered by the Secretary of the Interior as follows:

"(A) The entire 10.8-mile segment of the main stem, starting at its confluence with Lake Hayward Brook to its confluence with the Connecticut River at the mouth of Hamburg Cove, as a scenic river.

"(B) The 8.0-mile segment of the East Branch of the Eightmile River starting at Witch Meadow Road to its confluence with the main stem of the Eightmile River, as a scenic river.

"(C) The 3.9-mile segment of Harris Brook starting with the confluence of an unnamed

stream lying 0.74 miles due east of the intersection of Hartford Road (State Route 85) and Round Hill Road to its confluence with the East Branch of the Eightmile River, as a scenic river.

"(D) The 1.9-mile segment of Beaver Brook starting at its confluence with Cedar Pond Brook to its confluence with the main stem of the Eightmile River, as a scenic river.

"(E) The 0.7-mile segment of Falls Brook from its confluence with Tisdale Brook to its confluence with the main stem of the Eightmile River at Hamburg Cove, as a scenic river."

(c) MANAGEMENT.—The segments of the main stem and certain tributaries of the Eightmile River in the State of Connecticut designated as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System by the amendment made by subsection (b) (in this section referred to as the "Eightmile River") shall be managed in accordance with the Eightmile River Watershed Management Plan and such amendments to the plan as the Secretary of the Interior determines are consistent with this section. The Eightmile River Watershed Management Plan is deemed to satisfy the requirements for a comprehensive management plan required by section 3(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274(d)).

(d) COMMITTEE.—The Secretary of the Interior shall coordinate the management responsibilities of the Secretary with regard to the Eightmile River with the Eightmile River Coordinating Committee, as specified in the Eightmile River Watershed Management Plan.

(e) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—In order to provide for the long-term protection, preservation, and enhancement of the Eightmile River, the Secretary of the Interior may enter into cooperative agreements pursuant to sections 10(e) and 11(b)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1281(e), 1282(b)(1)) with the State of Connecticut, the towns of Salem, Lyme, and East Haddam, Connecticut, and appropriate local planning and environmental organizations. All cooperative agreements authorized by this subsection shall be consistent with the Eightmile River Watershed Management Plan and may include provisions for financial or other assistance from the United States.

(f) RELATION TO NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.—Notwithstanding section 10(c) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1281(c)), the Eightmile River shall not be administered as part of the National Park System or be subject to regulations which govern the National Park System.

(g) LAND MANAGEMENT.—The zoning ordinances adopted by the towns of Salem, East Haddam, and Lyme, Connecticut, in effect as of December 8, 2005, including provisions for conservation of floodplains, wetlands, and watercourses associated with the segments, are deemed to satisfy the standards and requirements of section 6(c) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1277 (c)). For the purpose of section 6(c) of that Act, such towns shall be deemed "villages" and the provisions of that section, which prohibit Federal acquisition of lands by condemnation, shall apply to the segments designated by subsection (a). The authority of the Secretary to acquire lands for the purposes of this Act shall be limited to acquisition by donation or acquisition with the consent of the owner thereof, and shall be subject to the additional criteria set forth in the Eightmile River Watershed Management Plan.

(h) WATERSHED APPROACH.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In furtherance of the watershed approach to resource preservation and enhancement articulated in the Eightmile River Watershed Management Plan, the tributaries of the Eightmile River watershed specified in paragraph (2) are recognized as integral to the protection and enhancement of the Eightmile River and its watershed.

(2) COVERED TRIBUTARIES.—Paragraph (1) applies with respect to Beaver Brook, Big Brook, Burnhams Brook, Cedar Pond Brook, Cranberry Meadow Brook, Early Brook, Falls Brook, Fra-

ser Brook, Harris Brook, Hedge Brook, Lake Hayward Brook, Malt House Brook, Muddy Brook, Ransom Brook, Rattlesnake Ledge Brook, Shingle Mill Brook, Strongs Brook, Tisdale Brook, Witch Meadow Brook, and all other perennial streams within the Eightmile River watershed.

(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section and the amendment made by subsection (b).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 986 would designate 25.3 miles of the Eightmile River and its tributaries in Connecticut as a national scenic river. The bill was introduced by my friend and freshman class colleague, Representative JOE COURTNEY, who has been a strong and effective advocate of this designation.

This legislation would protect portions of the Eightmile River that have been found to have "outstandingly remarkable" values, including an intact watershed with a natural flow, very high water quality, unusual geological features, and large numbers of rare plants and animals.

The bill would designate five segments of the river and its tributaries as scenic under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The designated segments would be managed according to a plan produced pursuant to the 2001 Eightmile River Wild and Scenic River Study Act.

The administration supports the bill, as we were told by a National Park Service witness at a hearing before the National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee on April 17. In a draft study, the agency found these portions of the river and its tributaries to be eligible and suitable for designation.

The bill is cosponsored by the entire Connecticut House delegation. Both Connecticut Senators support the designation, as does the Republican Governor of Connecticut. The bill also enjoys ample support from the local community, including the local governments of the towns of Salem, East Haddam and Lyme.

The river would be managed under a partnership agreement as envisioned in section 10(e) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The Congressional Budget Office has found that the bill contains no unfunded mandates, and will impose no

cost on State, local or tribal governments. CBO also says the bill will not affect direct spending, and will not significantly affect the National Park Service's costs.

□ 1430

During committee consideration of the bill, there had been expressed some concern about the private property protections in the bill. To ensure that the bill is absolutely clear on this point, my subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) offered, and the committee adopted, language that expressly deems the zoning ordinances adopted by the towns of Salem, East Haddam, and Lyme to satisfy section 6(c) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and limits the Secretary's acquisition authority to lands that are donated or bought from willing sellers. That provision tracks the language used in several wild and scenic river designations in the east, including the designation of Connecticut's other wild and scenic river, the Farmington River. The language has been in effect for over a decade without questions or ambiguity on those rivers or in court. According to the National Park Service, the administering agency, that language is absolutely unambiguous.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill. And I want to commend my colleague from Connecticut, Representative COURTNEY, for his commitment and leadership on this matter. We support passage of H.R. 986, as amended, and urge its adoption by the House today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, some of our Members believe H.R. 986 has significant negative implications on private property in Connecticut. Fuzzy language included in this bill may leave the door open for the Federal Government to use eminent domain to seize private property in this new designation. This is especially concerning because this is the same congressional district where the *Kelo v. New Haven* case originated. I remind my colleagues that many times the Federal Government uses just the threat of condemnation to frighten private property owners and to intimidate them until they become so-called "willing sellers." We must protect our constituents from this wanton abuse of power by making our intentions clear in this legislation.

Resource Committee Republicans made numerous efforts in both subcommittee and full committee to insert language that would have protected property owners in Connecticut. The language was plain and clear: Congress would not empower the Federal Government to condemn land and pressure owners into selling.

Unfortunately, these efforts were rebuffed by committee Democrats. It is still unclear to our side of the aisle

why the majority wants to expose property owners to the threat of eminent domain. The only reasonable conclusion is that they believe the Federal Government should and must confiscate private property.

Because this bill has been brought under suspension of the rules, the minority will not have the opportunity to clean it up before the full House.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the bill and stand up against this and other Kelo-style assaults on private property rights.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I just want to assure my colleague again that the bill as drafted and as proposed today is one that is very clear in terms of the protections that he seeks, and we were very careful over the course of this bill's evolution to make sure of that.

I would at this time, Mr. Speaker, wish to yield such time as he may consume to the sponsor of this legislation, the gentleman from Connecticut and a colleague of my class (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I, first of all, want to commend Mr. SARBANES for his superb summary of this legislation and the context in which it occurred and was introduced this year with the full support of the Connecticut delegation on a bipartisan basis, the Republican Governor of Connecticut, Jodi Rell, who was supporting the bill, and the Connecticut State legislature, which also passed a resolution in support of this measure. I also want to thank Chairman RAHALL and Ranking Member YOUNG for helping us bring this bill to the floor and also in particular subcommittee Chairman GRIJALVA and Ranking Member BISHOP for helping this bill through subcommittee and raising important issues, which, as has been pointed out, strike particularly close to home since the City of New London, which was a party to the Kelo case, was the locus of that decision and obviously caused great concern about property rights all across the country.

This bill, however, though, I believe is a balanced bill which represents more than 10 years of hard work by local citizens and elected officials to protect this important river and its intact watershed. The Eightmile River takes its name from the distance between its mouth at Lake Hayword to the Connecticut River and Long Island sound. It is unique in that it is a virtually free-flowing river over its entire run. The entire 62-square-mile watershed has a large forest cover and excellent water quality and is home to diverse fish populations and rare species. It is quite rare for a river of this size to be intact throughout its entire watershed, especially in areas so close to the coast of Long Island Sound and in such a densely populated State as the State of Connecticut.

After securing the go-ahead for a wild and scenic river study approved by

this Congress in 2001, local officials and advocates decided early on to base the study on a watershed approach, rather than looking at specific areas of the river.

The wild and scenic study identified six outstanding resource values including its watershed ecosystem, natural communities, and cultural landscape. It concluded that the 25 miles of the meandering Eightmile River should be recommended for designation as "scenic" under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

A management plan was approved by the three towns of East Haddam, Salem, and Lyme. And as I mentioned earlier, the General Assembly in Connecticut also joined in support for that management plan. And I will enter into the RECORD letters submitted by the First Selectmen of Salem and East Haddam, again bipartisan letters of support for this measure dated within the last about 48 hours or so.

SELECTMEN'S OFFICE,
East Haddam, CT, July 6, 2007.

An Act Concerning Designation of the Eightmile River Watershed within the National Wild and Scenic River System.

Hon. JOSEPH COURTNEY,
Congressman, Second District,
Norwich, CT.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY: Thank you for your time and efforts in this important matter. I am writing to reassure you that the citizens and elected officials of East Haddam are overwhelmingly in favor of Wild & Scenic designation.

Over ten years ago my predecessor, along with the First Selectmen from Lyme and Salem signed the Eightmile River Watershed Conservation Compact. That inter-municipal agreement represented East Haddam's commitment to a regional project that our town has participated in and endorsed widely. The Compact states: "We understand that 1) land use in our towns is the key determinant to the health of the Watershed's natural resources; 2) a healthy watershed ecosystem is consistent with our town goals of promoting a healthy community, preserving rural character, and nurturing suitable economic growth."

This broad view of the Eightmile River Watershed including its rural character, economic well being and intact natural resources has led to a heightened awareness and concern for this fragile system by a broad spectrum of town residents. Over the 12 years of East Haddam's participation in the Eightmile work, I have heard of only a small number of individuals who oppose the project. We have overwhelming support from the business community and private citizens alike. In fact, our river front landowners are some of the strongest advocates—they deeply understand the risks that unchecked development and sprawl will have on the river in their own back yards. The town has also taken measures to protect much of the open space in the watershed area.

Thanks again for your time and attention to our pristine Eightmile Watershed.

Sincerely,
BRAD PARKER,
First Selectman.

THE TOWN OF SALEM, CONNECTICUT,
July 9, 2007.

Hon. JOSEPH COURTNEY,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY: As First Selectman for the Town of Salem I would

like to reiterate Salem's strong commitment to protecting and preserving the Eight Mile River and the surrounding watershed. Resources such as this are critically important to the health and well being of all residents in this part of southeastern Connecticut, and need to be recognized for their intrinsic value.

Federal designation as a Wild and Scenic River is an important part of preserving this natural resource. The Town of Salem is pleased that you have chosen to sponsor this effort and guide it through the legislative process. Thank you, and if we can be of any additional assistance in support of your efforts, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

R. LARRY REITZ,
First Selectman.

Mr. Speaker, as I said from the beginning, this is a locally driven effort, and over the course of this study there were forums, mailings, public meetings, and even a local land use commissioners summit, which demonstrated broad bipartisan support for the legislation.

Although located in a rural area of Connecticut, the watershed is no less susceptible to unchecked growth and development. But it is important, and, again, this I know was raised by the minority, to emphasize that the bill before us today preserves the rights of landowners. Section 2(g)(2) specifically prohibits the use of eminent domain-type powers for this system. And, again, we have experience in Connecticut with the Farmington River Wild and Scenic designation to know that that language is, in fact, a barrier for any kind of unwarranted intrusion by the Federal Government over private property rights. And, again, the amendment, which Mr. SARBANES referred to, in the subcommittee, if anything, beefed up that protection to make sure that any concerns which may exist about involuntary takings are addressed in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act will next year celebrate its 40th year of successful environmental stewardship in this country. And it is important to add the Eightmile, a river with unique, intact natural resources, to the list of important rivers protected under this act. Designation as a member of the wild and scenic river system would facilitate long-term coordination among the towns within the watershed and increase local commitment to long-term river protection.

The entire Connecticut delegation is supportive of this endeavor; and to my colleagues in the House, I ask them to join me in support of this legislation. And, again, I thank Mr. SARBANES for his support.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 986, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA MASTER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT FEASIBILITY STUDY

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1337) to provide for a feasibility study of alternatives to augment the water supplies of the Central Oklahoma Master Conservancy District and cities served by the District, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1337

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CENTRAL OKLAHOMA MASTER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT FEASIBILITY STUDY.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) Thunderbird Lake, located on Little River in central Oklahoma, was constructed in 1965 by the Bureau of Reclamation for flood control, water supply, recreation, and fish and wildlife purposes;

(2) the available yield of Thunderbird Lake is allocated to the Central Oklahoma Master Conservancy District, which supplies municipal and industrial water supplies to the cities of Norman, Midwest City, and Del City, Oklahoma; and

(3) studies conducted by the Bureau during fiscal year 2003 indicate that the District will require additional water supplies to meet the future needs of the District, including through—

(A) the drilling of additional wells;

(B) the implementation of a seasonal pool plan at Thunderbird Lake;

(C) the construction of terminal storage to hold wet-weather yield from Thunderbird Lake;

(D) a reallocation of water storage; and

(E) the importation of surplus water from sources outside the basin of Thunderbird Lake.

(b) STUDY.—Beginning no later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation shall conduct a feasibility study of alternatives to augment the water supplies of the Central Oklahoma Master Conservancy District and cities served by the District, including recommendations of the Commissioner, if any.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation \$900,000 to conduct the study under subsection (b).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise

and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of H.R. 1337, introduced by our colleague, Congressman TOM COLE of Oklahoma, is to direct the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation to conduct a feasibility study on alternatives to augment the water supplies of the Central Oklahoma Master Conservancy District and cities served by the district.

The Norman Project was constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation for municipal and industrial water supply, flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife purposes in central Oklahoma. Population growth in the area is increasing pressure on already constrained water supplies, and the demand for water is expected to surpass the supply that the Norman Project in its present form can provide.

A preliminary report on alternative measures to augment water supplies at Lake Thunderbird has already been completed. The report concluded that a need exists to improve municipal and industrial water supplies from the Norman Project and that a number of alternatives are available to meet that need. A feasibility study is required to fully evaluate all the alternatives. H.R. 1337 directs the Bureau of Reclamation to conduct such a study.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1337.

This bill, which I authored, provides for a water feasibility study to ascertain additional sources of water for the Central Oklahoma Master Conservancy District, which serves the cities of Norman, Midwest City, and Del City, Oklahoma. This bill provides limited Federal assistance, with the Conservancy District providing a local 50/50 match and demonstrating their dedication to this critical initiative. This legislation will help address and alleviate the water challenges facing these three cities. I would like to commend and sincerely thank all the parties involved in working hard to help see this bill pass into public law.

The primary source of water for the Conservancy District is Lake Thunderbird, completed in 1965 by the Bureau of Reclamation. Incidentally, since 1988 one of the cities serviced by the Conservancy District, Norman, Oklahoma, has on numerous occasions exceeded their annual share of Lake Thunderbird's supplies. As a result, Norman has been forced to pull additional water from its original water source used before Lake Thunderbird was built and create an emergency supply line from